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Governor's Economic Development Advisory Council convenes initial meeting

(UTULEI) - The Governor's Economic Development Advisory Council convened its initial meeting yesterday at H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei) in Utulei. The Council, appointed this week by Governor Togiola Tulafono, is composed of 25 members of key private sector leaders. The purpose of the Council is to provide significant input, constructive feedback and additional perspectives on specific economic development implementation strategies for American Samoa.

Governor Togiola expressed his gratitude to the Council for accepting the appointment to serve and he welcomed their representation as it will enhance the Territory's economic development strategies and create a stronger connection between government and the private sector.

"I very much appreciate your acceptance of the invitation to serve on the Council and I truly believe that your contribution is the key to creating solid and effective policy," said Governor Togiola. "You are all professional economic development leaders that will appropriately assist in achieving a higher level of awareness and understanding of significant issues, challenges and progress associated with the continuing development of the Council."

Co-Chairpersons for the Council are Mr. David Robinson, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Oreta Mapu Togafau, Governor's Senior Policy Advisor.

Mr. Robinson also thanked the members for their participation and told the Council that he looks forward to their valuable input to the many initiatives associated with the development of the Council.

"We are very serious here. So, if you feel you don't want to take this seriously this is the time to raise your hand. We in the private sector are a large group. Together we can make a lot of noise to get things done," said Mr. Robinson.

An Executive Committee was formed from chairs of subcommittees and will meet on December 18 to discuss specific strategies and report back to the Advisory Council.

Joining Governor Togiola at the inaugural meeting were Lauvao Steven Haleck - MHJ Development Corporation, Va'amua Henry Sesepasara - Pago Pago Fisheries, Alphonso Pete Galea'i - COS Samoa Packing, Robert J. Uhrle - Toa Communications, Mary Anderson - Lesco Appliances, Vui Florence Saulo - Florence Saulo & Associates, Brian Glass - Bank of Hawaii, Lautogia T. Taula - E&W Construction, Wallace Thompson - Sea Captain, Leusoga William Emmesley - ASCC Workforce Development, Gary Ayres - ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank, Vince Haleck - South Pacific Express, Poe Mageo - Pago Airport Inn, Ainu'u Ta'ase Amosa - Samoa Post, Tom Drabble - Dateline Industries, Ben Solaita - SouthWest Marine, Taulapapa William Sword - BP Oil South-West Pacific, Leilua Stevenson - StarKist Samoa, Ethan Lake - Blue Sky Communications and Robin Annesley Dalton - Samoa News. Also appointed on the Council and were unable to attend: Michael Reid - CEO of Reid Companies, Sione Kava - Office of Petroleum Management, Fiti Sunia - Pago Pago Times, Dean Hudson - Fletcher Construction and Andy Forsgren - Forsgren Ltd.

(Continued on page 2)

Governor Togiola Offers Condolences on Passing of Associate Judge Sagapolutele Malaeola

(UTULEI) – Governor Togiola Tulafono offered the following statement upon learning of the passing of Associate Judge Sagapolutele Malaeola:

“I was deeply saddened to learn of the sudden passing of one of American Samoa’s most notable and humble public servants Associate Judge Sagapolutele Malaeola.

Judge Sagapolutele committed his professional life serving the people of American Samoa in all three branches of government beginning with the Department of Education, then the Legislature, and most recently, the Judicial branch. The leaders and the people of American Samoa are grateful for Judge Sagapolutele’s lifelong dedication and passion for public service.

He also served as a matai and a deacon where he espoused the importance of practicing the faasamoa with God’s love and guidance.

To him we owe a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for his service and contribution in both government and village life and especially for the legacy he leaves behind for the church, family, and village.

On behalf of the Territory and people of American Samoa, Mary Ann joins me in offering to the children, Judge Sagapolutele’s brothers and sisters, and the entire Sagapolutele Family our sincerest sympathy and condolences.

May God’s love and grace comfort and strengthen the children and the Sagapolutele family during this very difficult and challenging time.”



Co-Chairpersons for the Governor’s Economic Development Advisory Council - Mr. David Robinson (right), President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Oreta Mapu Togafau, Governor’s Senior Policy Advisor, lead discussions of the initial Council meeting yesterday at H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei) in Utulei. The purpose of the Council is to provide significant input, constructive feedback and additional perspectives on specific economic development implementation strategies. The Council, appointed this week by Governor Togiola Tulafono, is composed of 25 members of key private sector leaders. [photo: americansamoa.gov]

Governor’s Economic Development Advisory Council (from page 1)

Governor Togiola also appointed to the Council, as non-voting members, Mageo Umaleava Ieti - Director of Human Resources, Apefa’i Taifane - Director of Agriculture, Matagi Ray Mailo McMoore - Director of Port Administration, Aleki Sene - Executive Director of ASTCA, Michael Keyser - Acting CEO of ASPA, Dr. Claire Poumele - Director of Education, Dr. Seth Poumele Galea’i - Vice President of ASCC, and Fanuatele Dr. Vaiaga’e To’afa - Director of ASEPA.



Director of Youth & Women’s Affairs - Leiataua Lenga Turner (seated, left) held its second monthly “Women and Youth Initiative and Brainstorming Meeting” on Thursday, November 29th, at the EOB in Utulei. The gathering included discussion on ways to revitalize traditional practices of handcraft making, weaving and sewing, and also cooking of traditional Samoan food and re-planting of indigenous trees. If you’re interested in attending the next monthly, please call the Department of Youth and Women’s Affairs at 633-2835 or 633-2836. Pictured (seated, left to right): YWA Director Leiataua Mrs. Lenga Turner, Mrs. Sive Linjau, Mrs. Fesala’i Tuitele, Mrs. Tofiga Tuitele, and Mrs. To’aono Kelemete. (Second row, l to r): Mrs. Doreen Amituana’I, Mrs. Maelega Amani, Mrs. Rosita Lusi, Mrs. Salome Soa, Mrs. Fagalama Fuala’au, Mrs. Etenauga Lutu, and YWA Administrative Assistant - Mrs. Ramona Toeaina and YWA Secretary - Ms. Saini Vele. (Back row, l to r): Sali Manaia, Isitolo Ieremia, Iulimasao Fetuna’i, and YWA Deputy Director - Roy Ausage. [photo: americansamoa.gov]

Togiola apologizes to summer reading teachers for late paychecks

Governor Togiola Tulafono took it upon himself to look into complaints lodged last month by a local teacher who worked for the summer Reading Well program and claimed that compensation was still not received for services rendered.

According to the Governor, after looking into the matter, he discovered that the complaint was indeed a fact.

During his weekend radio talk show program, Togiola said that this wasn't an isolated case, as over 100 teachers had not been paid. However, the delay was not because of funding issues but instead, because the Department of Education was not on top of their game as far as properly processing paperwork to authorize the payments.

After offering his apologies on the air to the teachers who were affected by the delay and thanking them for their patience, the Governor assured the teachers that they should be receiving their paychecks later this week.

"It is sad that it took intervention by the Governor to ensure that we get paid," said one of the school teachers who wanted to extend her gratitude to Togiola for his efforts. "It's nice to know that the head of our government thought we were important enough for him to step in and take action. We worked throughout the summer and never got paid for it but now thanks to the Governor, we look forward to receiving our money just in time for the holidays."

ASG departments will sing their hearts out during this year's Territorial Christmas Program

The holiday spirit is alive and well in American Samoa as hundreds of employees from different agencies and departments within the American Samoa Government are already preparing to ring in the holiday season in colorful uniforms while performing joyful carols and skits for the annual Territorial Christmas Program scheduled to take place on December 12, 13, and 14 at the Malaeoletalu Fagatogo Pavilion.

(The event will precede the annual Christmas Holiday Music Festival sponsored by the American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, and Humanities on December 16-18 where performances will feature different community members representing churches, youth groups, and international organizations).

Rehearsals have already begun for most of the government departments including Public Works whose employees are rehearsing at the M&O compound in Tafuna, and the Department of Human and Social Services who can be seen and heard in front of the ASNAP (food stamp) office every afternoon.

Through a memo signed October 17, Lt. Governor Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia said that the Territorial Christmas Program sponsored by ASG has always been the local highlight of the Christmas season. It has become a wonderful opportunity to rejoice in the many blessings we enjoy as an island community through joyful celebration in song, dance, skits, and plays of the festive season.

All departments and agencies are requested to fully participate in the Christmas Program through ten-minute presentations of Christmas carols and/or skits.

Some departments will come together in presenting combined performances. This year, the Treasury Department, including its Customs Division, will not be participating in the Christmas Program as Treasurer Velega Savali has informed Governor Togiola Tulafono that his staff will be busy preparing everything for the auditors who will be here during that time, and employees from the Customs Division are currently undergoing training on their new computer system.

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On November 28, 1907, the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila's station ship, USS *Annapolis*, "with Commander Charles Brainard Taylor Moore, United States Navy, Governor of Tutuila, in command, left the Naval Station, Tutuila, for Papeete, Tahiti"... "to observe the total eclipse of the sun on January 3, 1908"... "at Flint Island, longitude 151degrees 48' W., latitude 11degrees 26' S." An "eclipse party" from the Lick Observatory (in Santa Cruz, California) was on board, assisted by Assistant Astronomer Benjamin Boss.

On November 28, 1918, Western Samoa's Administrator, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Logan of the New Zealand Army, angry because of American Samoa's quarantine of all ships (to guard against the worldwide outbreak of Spanish influenza) ordered that all wireless communications with American Samoa be cut. Because of Logan's actions, Western Samoa received no medical aid from American Samoa during the pandemic, although American Samoa's governor, Commander John Martin Poyer, had offered to send help.

On November 28, 1952, James Arthur Ewing took office as American Samoa's third appointed civil governor (until March 4, 1953).

On November 29, 1940, Admiral Harold Raynsford Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, directed that U.S. Marine Corps Captain Alfred R. Pefley's plan for the defense of Tutuila be implemented immediately.

On November 29, 1970, His Holiness Pope Paul VI visited Western Samoa and later American Samoa, thus becoming the only Pontiff to visit Samoa.

On December 2, 1899, a tripartite convention met in Washington, D.C. to finalize the agreement which partitioned Samoa, and was signed aboard USS *Badger* in Apia Harbor on November 14, 1899.

On December 2, 1901, the United States Department of the Navy ruled that "(a) The occupancy of Tutuila is quite distinct from the sovereignty exercised at Porto [sic] Rico, Hawaii and Guam. (b) It is not foreign but domestic territory. (c) Samoans are not 'citizens of the United States,' but owe allegiance to the flag."

On December 3, 1894, Robert Louis Stevenson died of a cerebral hemorrhage "on a cot, in the hall" at his home "Vailima," in Western Samoa.

On December 4, 1889, at a *fono* held in Lepea, 'Upolu, Malietoa Laupepa was once again declared "King of Samoa." The chiefs from Tutuila who attended were "Faivaie, Letuli, Satele, Toomata, Taua, Tauiiile [sic], Noa, Alapa, Olo, Salavea, Mauga, Sai, Leiato, Alo, Faumuina, Pele, Sauea."

ASEPA staff certifies Water quality labs in Palau and Yap

American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency staff members Edna Buchan and LT Elena Vaouli of the US Public Health Service recently certified the water quality laboratories of the Palau Environmental Quality Protection Board (EQPB) and the Yap State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Furthermore, analysts from both labs were also certified.

The FAS lab certification program was designed and developed over a one year period by ASEPA water program manager Buchan and LT Vaouli, who serves as deputy water program manager and an officer of the US Public Health Service.

"To take this program from concept to implementation in a single year was a lot of work," Buchan said. "Admittedly, we are proud of our accomplishments."

An excited ASEPA director Fanuatele Dr. Toafa Vaiaga'e added, "We are proud to have provided the lead in the development and implementation of this important program to help our sister islands, and ASEPA will continue to provide this service to the FAS islands whenever the need may arise."

The US Freely Associated States (FAS) Laboratory Certification Program was first proposed during the June 2006 Pacific Islands Environmental Directors and Managers meeting held in Kona, Hawaii. At the meeting, the Directors of the FAS water quality programs, including the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap), the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, expressed a need to improve operational standards for their labs.

It was Fanuatele who accepted the request from these pacific islands who requested ASEPA's technical assistance in helping out with certifying their laboratories.

The ASEPA director supports the partnership program wholeheartedly because certification of laboratory facilities and personnel (as analysts) are necessary in ensuring that a laboratory produces scientifically valid and legally defensible data, which further ensures that the data presented to the public is reliable.

Fanuatele said that since ASEPA is way ahead, due to their participation in the lab certification program conducted by the federal government (USEPA), "it is an honor for me to lend a helping hand to our sister islands through this valuable partnership program."

The labs in Palau and Yap are the first ones in the FAS to be certified under the new program. According to LT Vaouli, Palau and Yap have excellent laboratories and a well qualified staff.

"We hope other labs in the FAS will follow their example," Vaouli said, adding that she wants people to be assured that ASEPA is not neglecting work at home, as staff members reach out across the Pacific to help other islands.

The ASEPA lab and analysts passed their USEPA certification review in September 2007. Certification audits for the Marshall Islands and the other FSM states are planned for 2008.

Governor Togiola remembers Associate Judge Sagapolutele

High Court Associate Judge Sagapolutele Malaeola, 68, of Ili'iili passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, Nov. 24. Upon hearing the news, Governor Togiola Tulafono said he was "deeply saddened" as Sagapolutele was "one of American Samoa's most notable and humble public servants."

Prior to his sudden death, Sagapolutele, a deacon at the Ili'iili Catholic Church and one of the high talking chiefs of the village, served as an associate judge at the High Court of American Samoa for twelve years.

His long time friend and colleague Chief Associate Judge Logoai Siaki said that Sagapolutele's death "is a big loss for me and the Court." Logoai added that he would often seek advice from Sagapolutele whom he described as a very quiet and humble man who took his work very seriously and was very considerate.

"Judge Sagapolutele committed his professional life serving the people of American Samoa in all three branches of government beginning with the Department of Education, then the Legislature, and most recently, the Judicial branch," Togiola said in a statement. "The leaders and the people of American Samoa are grateful for Judge Sagapolutele's lifelong dedication and passion for public service."

The Governor said that it was Sagapolutele's service as a matai and deacon where he espoused the importance of practicing the faasamoa with God's love and guidance.

"To him we owe a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for his service and contribution in both government and village life and especially for the legacy he leaves behind for the church, family, and village," Togiola said.

"On behalf of the Territory and people of American Samoa, Mary Ann joins me in offering to the children, Judge Sagapolutele's brothers and sisters, and the entire Sagapolutele Family our sincerest sympathy and condolences."

He concluded, "May God's love and grace comfort and strengthen the children and the Sagapolutele family during this very difficult and challenging time."

Sagapolutele passed away in front of a grocery store in Ili'iili on Saturday morning after he left home for his usual weekend walks. The news of his death came as a shock to everyone, as Sagapolutele was not known to be ill.

Born Anthony Malaeola Sagapolutele on May 28, 1939, the late associate judge was married to Matalua who passed away in 2003. The couple is survived by their 12 children and grandchildren.

Governor Togiola declares Dec. 1 as World AIDS Day in the territory

Governor Togiola Tulafono has joined the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS and has declared December 1, 2007 as World AIDS Day in American Samoa - a day to expand and strengthen the worldwide effort to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

With that, the Governor urges all citizens "to take part in prevention activities and observances designed to increase awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS as a global challenge, and to join the global effort to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS."

A special Mass that was held at the Alao Catholic Church yesterday stressed the importance of keeping HIV/AIDS out of the territory, with the speakers repeating the same old adage of "better safe than sorry."

The church service was well attended by government officials, members of the Fono, ministers from different villages and religious denominations, health care professionals, the management and staff of ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank, and other supporters of the HIV/AIDS program.

Department of Health director Utoofili Asofaafetai Maga spoke in place of Governor Togiola who was unable to attend the church service. According to Utoofili, since the HIV/AIDS program opened its doors in the territory 19 years ago in 1988, a total of six Samoans were confirmed to have the disease and all have since passed away.

Utoofili said that all six people were diagnosed from off island and had traveled to the territory to spend their last days with family members and friends.

"HIV is the virus that causes AIDS, which is a disease that has no cure," Utoofili explained, adding that over the past few years, pills and shots have been discovered to slow down the progression of AIDS but a cure is yet to be found.

The road leading to AIDS consists of different stages and because there is no known cure, Utoofili says that the best way to stay safe is to heed the advice of medical experts and stay away from participating in activities where AIDS can be contacted.

"Once AIDS becomes common and starts spreading here in the territory, that's it!" said Utoofili. He added that the territory has the lowest recorded cases of HIV/AIDS compared to other neighboring Pacific islands and nations.

"This is something we should be very thankful for," he said. "There are times when it will be hard to resist temptation and urges that we encounter but we need to love ourselves, love our families, and do what we can to keep this deadly disease out of the territory."

Utoofili thanked the local HIV/AIDS program manager Fara Utu and her staff, as well as the employees of the Department of Health who have been active in spearheading efforts to educate and inform the public about AIDS and its effects.

"We as a community need to work together to combat this disease because we are a small island. Once we start seeing an increase in the number of AIDS cases, we will be in trouble," Utoofili concluded.

In his proclamation, Governor Togiola noted that the global spread of HIV infection and AIDS necessitates a worldwide effort to increase communication and action to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

According to estimates, at the end of 2006, the number of people living with HIV was 39.5 million worldwide. An estimated 4.3 million became newly infected with HIV and 2.9 million people have lost their lives to AIDS.

Togiola said, "The American Samoa Government, in conjunction with the American Association for World Health, is encouraging a better understanding of the challenge of HIV/AIDS nationally as it recognizes that the number of people diagnosed with HIV and AIDS in the United States continues to increase."

World AIDS Day provides an opportunity to focus local, national, and international attention on HIV infection and AIDS to disseminate information on how to prevent the spread of HIV.

The Governor proclaimed that World AIDS Day 2007 theme: Take the Lead: Prevent AIDS, highlights the need for innovation, vision, and perseverance in the face of the AIDS challenge. The campaign calls on all sectors of society such as families, communities, and civil society organizations - rather than just governments - to take the initiative and provide leadership on AIDS.

Recently, the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), issued a notice of grant award for \$51,979 to the local Department of Health's HIV/AIDS program.

The grant is from the Title II program, meaning that the money is intended for use on the care and treatment of individuals with HIV/AIDS.

Everyone is urged to come in and take a free confidential AIDS test which is conducted on a walk-in basis from 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Results of the test are only known to Utu and one other person from her staff who is a certified health educator. Results cannot be given over the phone.

This year alone, over 1,320 local residents have been tested for HIV/AIDS. "This number is just a percentage of the population which is about 65,000," Utu said, adding that testing isn't the only service they provide, as they can also provide medications, as well as care and treatment for individuals who test positive.

More information on the HIV/AIDS program can be obtained by calling Utu and her staff at 633-2437 or visiting their office in Fagaalu.

Set Design Offers ASCC Art Students Unique Learning Opportunities

By James Kneubuhl, ASCC Press Officer

The American Samoa Community College (ASCC) presentation of "Fiddler on the Roof" will mark the fifth straight semester where students from the Fine Arts Department have put together an elaborate musical production. For these kind of shows, the cast often receives the accolades for their singing, dancing and acting skills, but many overlook the crucial "behind the scene" efforts of the student artists who make sure the production has the appropriate stage design. Since the beginning of this semester, ASCC Art instructor Regina Meredith and her students in the class Design Fundamentals (ART 160) have put countless hours into creating the backgrounds that suggest the Russian village of the early 1900s where "Fiddler" takes place.

"Besides the actors and their costumes, the students and I produce pretty much everything else you see on the stage," explained Meredith. "I orchestrate the overall concept, and then the students help to paint, build, and finalize most props and sets. Each production requires a completely new stage design, and we do as much as we can to create this in the time we have" A visitor to the ASCC Visual Arts classroom in the last few weeks would have found the Design Fundamental students, assisted by Meredith and her Art majors, working individually or in small groups on a myriad of separate projects that will eventually all come together to create the right stage atmosphere for the play. While one group worked on a piece that resembles the doorway of a home, another painted large moveable backdrops to suggest a village. Some worked on crafting props resembling tombstones to suggest a graveyard, while others busied themselves creating a variety of small items one might see in a Russian village. "Each piece the students finish will make the set look that more convincing," said Meredith, "but no sooner do we complete one task then it's on to the next, and we have to hustle to make sure we have everything done by the time the production rolls around."

"Fiddler on the Roof" will to Meredith and her students, as occasion where ASCC will use Auditorium for a show. The its Auditorium for theatrical that space now undergoing hall and additional classrooms, had to find an alternative venue "We have to get the stage at the a shorter amount of time than everything out immediately after said Meredith. "The distance

Utulei will present yet another the show must go on."

Despite the complexities that designs, Meredith feels the learning opportunities it offers makes up for the challenges. "When the class works towards putting on an actual play, the classroom expands beyond the door and the walls," she said. "It enables the students to put into action the rudiments we cover in this course in a very real and important way. Students get to apply theories on working from a center, on applying the right combinations of colors, and on what the French call *trompe l'oeil*, which means deceiving the eye by painting visual textures. Of course, working on a deadline means they also have to learn about cooperation. They surprise me with wonderful working habits and a good rapport. A teacher couldn't ask for anything more!"

Meredith also acknowledged the assistance of her Art majors, who work in tandem the Design Fundamental students. "The Art majors have already taken the class," she said, "but they continue to join in as a way of developing their skills. This semester, we have majors AJ Afano, Michael Tui, Aufaga Tiimalu, Chris Lafoai and Henry Utoaluga working with us and making valuable contributions."

Besides Meredith and her Visual Arts students, the upcoming production of "Fiddler" will also afford the rest of the Fine Arts Department the opportunity to showcase what they do best. Drama and Dance instructor Carmela Gallace has worked hard throughout the semester to prepare her student cast for the demands of the play, while Music instructor Kuki Tuiasosopo has helped them fine-tune their vocal skills. "I feel really proud of the progress our department has made as a team," said Fine Arts Department chairman Namulauulu Dr. Paul Pouesi, who oversees the entire process of making the production a reality. "People have said we could never produce a show that lives up to mainland standards, but thanks to the Fine Arts staff, I think we get closer all the time." Dr. Pouesi also expressed his thanks to ASCC Acting President Dr. Seth Galea'i, Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Irene Helsham, and Penni Morris-Utu of the President's office for their support of the production.



ASCC Art instructor Regina Meredith (front row, third right) and her Design Fundamentals students prepare the set pieces for the College's production of "Fiddler on the Roof". (Photo: J. Kneubuhl)

present a new challenge this marks the first the stage in the Lee College previously used presentations, but with renovation into a lecture the Fine Arts Department for this semester's play. Lee Auditorium set up in usual, and then move the last performance," from the College to

challenge, but as they say,

come with creating set

ASCC's Upward Bound Program to get \$906,400 over next four years

The American Samoa Community College's Upward Bound Program has been awarded \$226,600 for each year during the next four year cycle.

The announcement was made last week by Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin after he received official notification from the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education who oversees grants for Trio Upward Bound Programs.

ASCC has to compete against other programs from the fifty states and insular jurisdictions by submitting a grant proposal based on program evaluations and performance reports.

Funding priority and ranking are determined based on the qualifying score each proposal receives. From there, the amount of grant awards is allocated accordingly.

ASCC no longer has to apply co-jointly under the Northern Marianas College Upward Bound Program because in 2003, ASCC became a stand alone grantee, which meant they were qualified to apply for funds directly from the program.

"I am very pleased that these federal funds have become available for our high school students in American Samoa to improve their chances to succeed in college," Faleomavaega said through a statement. "As I have always said, the key to our success as a community is in education and I strongly urge the parents of qualified high school students and the Upward Bound Program administrators at ASCC to take full advantage of this federal program and ensure its success and continuation in the future for our sons and daughters."

The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

According to the Congressman, Upward Bound projects are designed to generate in its participants the skills and motivation necessary for success in education beyond secondary level. The program provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. Upward Bound serves high school students who are U.S. citizens or U.S. nationals from low-income families; high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree; and low-income, first generation military veterans who are preparing to enter postsecondary education.

Faleomavaega congratulates ASCC President Dr. Adele Satele-Galea'i and her leadership team at ASCC "for their hard work and determination which is attributable to receiving this award."

ASG's Soil and Water Conservation District receives ANA grant to assist piggery owners

The American Samoa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will receive over \$220,000 over the next two years from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) which will make it easier for local pig farm owners to renovate their piggeries.

The program also establishes the Interagency Piggery Management Group, which will include representatives from the Department of Commerce, Land Grant, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The group will provide educational resources on how to operate a piggery, including information on USDA programs available to help qualified farmers pay for piggery renovations.

(The SWCD is a local government board established under local law to protect the territory's soil and water resources. It is comprised of officials representing different ASG agencies including Land Grant, ASPA, ASEPA, DOC, and the Office of Samoan Affairs).

Most of the grant award will be used to help provide engineering services to local piggery owners who are pursuing Land Use Permits to renovate already existing piggery operations - or build new ones. Interested farmers can attend monthly meetings to discuss the design process and the Land Use Permit application process.

The project helps make it easier for piggery owners to comply with ASEPA regulations for local piggeries. Piggery owners seeking a Land Use Permit are required to have an engineering design and site survey, which can be costly. But the project will use funds from the ANA to hire an engineer to provide those services at no cost to the farmer.

The funds will also be used to renovate a local facility to store dry wood chips which are important to piggery owners adopting the "dry litter" piggery design, one of three recommended designs that meet regulations set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency for handling pig waste.

Sopoaga Sagaga of Fofoga Electrical Services Inc., a private sector partner involved in the project, has offered his land at the Tafuna Industrial Park for the storage of wood chips produced by his crew.

Wood chips are expected to be available at the site in the near future at the low price of \$5 for a pickup truck full.

Interested farmers who want to know more about the services and resources available to help them stay in the pig farming business can benefit greatly from the monthly meetings with the Interagency Piggery Management Group.

More information on the dates and times of the group's next meeting can be obtained by calling project administrator Crystal Te'o @ 633-1031 ext. 25

Commerce Commission issues Notice of Intended Action to amend ASAC Title 19

The Commerce Commission has publicly announced a notice of intended agency action to amend and renumber Title 19, Chapter 01 of the American Samoa Administrative Code, particularly the section that refers to the Transportation of Persons and Freight.

The proposed amendments are being supported by many people who strongly believe that the owners and operators of public transportation - buses and taxis – should be prepared, briefed, and up to standard in preparation for the busy traffic expected during the upcoming Pacific Arts Festival scheduled to be hosted locally in about 8 months.

The Pacific Arts Festival will be the biggest event ever to be hosted in American Samoa, expected to bring in the highest number of tourists and visitors the territory has ever seen at one time.

According to an announcement signed by Commerce Commission chairman Faleseu Eliu Paopao, the substance of the proposed amendments includes the establishment of new taxi rates, and the requirement that the rates and a photo ID of the driver be posted.

Furthermore, the proposed amendment prescribes all taxis to be uniform in color, prohibits smoking in both taxis and buses, and sets a procedure for applying for a Certificate of Convenience.

The proposed amendments include the prohibiting of tinted windows on commercial vehicles, and prescribing a minimum size for buses which is an issue that has set off a few bus owners and operators who operate strictly with the use of a fleet featuring smaller size buses.

A full text copy of the proposed action can be obtained at the Department of Commerce on the second floor of the Executive Office Building (EOB) in Utulei during normal business hours. Interested persons may present their views thereon in writing on or before December 1.

Major reconstruction of the main road in town contracted for over \$8 million

The numerous potholes on the bumpy stretch of the main highway extending from downtown Fagatogo to the Pago Plaza will eventually be a thing of the past once the contractors are finished with it.

The reconstruction of the this area of the main highway has been discussed for a while and finally, the Federal Highway Administration has given its nod of approval to awarding the contract to McConnell Dowell at a price of more than \$8 million.

Public Works director Taeaotui Punafo Tilei confirmed the news and said that negotiations on the final price concluded last week after lengthy discussions and numerous counter offers being thrown back and forth between DPW and the contractors.

A pre-construction meeting is set for next week and according to Taeaotui, if all goes well, the Notice to Proceed (NTP) will be issued shortly thereafter and the project, expected to take 12 months, will finally commence.

The finalization of the contract award comes after Taeaotui and the gang juggled with the possibility of breaking the project into two phases and proceeding that way.

But the final decision was based on efforts to keep the project as a single job instead of splitting it up, and constructing an asphalt road. Currently, McConnell Dowell is the only local company that can provide such services.

The new road will run from the Fire Station in Fagatogo to the Pago Plaza, which is the only patch of the main highway between Atu'u and Matu'u/Faganeanea that hasn't undergone major reconstruction work in recent years.

The new road will feature sidewalks, designated areas for buses to pull in and out of, and necessary drainage improvement work.

SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa. Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to: Harry Stevens (harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov) or Vince Iuli (vince.iuli@americansamoa.gov)

New computer software brings major changes to Customs operations

Local businesses were informed by Chief of Customs Glen Lefiti in a Nov. 14 letter that come January 1, 2008, the Customs Division of the Treasury Department will no longer accept any paper version of the Declaration of Entry.

Lefiti has informed all shippers, consolidators, and local importers about the new policy, which comes with the implementation of a new computer software for Customs.

“This automated system will streamline our daily operations and improve data/excise tax collections,” Lefiti wrote. “The software has the capability of assessing imported commodities using the Harmonized Tariff Schedule and assessing the excise tax based on information provided by the consignee.”

The system will print out, among other things, the complete Declaration of Entry and a receipt, in addition to tracking container inspection and undeclared or duty free items.

Customs has informed the business community about the new computerized system and software. The major change is the submission of the declaration form in electronic format using software which Customs will provide to the shipper, consolidator, or local importer (i.e. merchants and consignees).

The software replaces the manual declaration form and the software will work on any PC-compatible computer running any version of Microsoft Windows.

Customs will have a different version (remote manifest) of the same software for shippers, to use for the submission of the ship/flight manifest.

The Customs Office will have the ‘consolidator’ version of the software for businesses providing courier services like DHL, FedEx, FAX Cargo or any business that ships for “other” local customers.

Customs is providing training and assistance to customers for the installation and use of the software (11/19-11/21 and 11/26-11/30). Customs is available during and after training to answer any questions.

Failure to attend the scheduled training means the customer’s cargo will remain at the dock until an electronic format of the declaration of entry is submitted to Customs.

ASG gets \$20 million loan check from the Retirement Fund

Seven months after it was approved by the Governor with an immediate effective date, ASG Treasurer Velega Savali has finally received and signed off on a check for \$20 million from the ASG Retirement Fund.

The money is for the loan already approved by the Fono earlier this year in March and signed by Governor Togiola Tulafono shortly thereafter in April.

The loan money is to finance infrastructure projects in Tutuila and the Manu’a Islands, as well as provide assistance with the territory’s hosting of next year’s Pacific Arts Festival.

The list of projects includes a new Port Administration Office and Fire Department building, the acquisition of a new tugboat, construction of a new building for the Fono, installation of a much needed antenna for KVZK-TV, and erection of a new animal pound and veterinary clinic.

The loan will be paid through portions of the excise taxes imposed on and collected from alcohol and tobacco products. Loan payments are to be made quarterly (every three months), according to the legislation.

Velega reported that excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco products, in addition to customs fees and charges that go into the Debt Service Fund have decreased in the last six years, dropping to a low \$3.6 million last year and peaking at \$4 million during fiscal year (FY) 2003.

CJ Michael Kruse selected as secretary of the Pacific Judicial Council

The Marianas Variety newspaper has reported that Chief Justice of the High Court of American Samoa F. Michael Kruse has been selected to serve as secretary of the Pacific Judicial Council, a group which is comprised of justices and judges from throughout the Pacific region.

The Pacific Judicial Council gives island judiciaries the opportunity to explore emerging issues in a variety of legal areas that include criminal law, ethics and technology, and constitutional law.

Kruse’s selection was announced on Sunday during the Council’s annual meeting held in Guam.

Others who were elected include Chief justice Miguel Demapan of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) who will serve as President, assisted by Chief Justice of the Chuuk Supreme Court Camillo Noket who is the new vice president.

Chief Judge of the U.S District Court of Guam Frances Tydingco-Gatewood is the treasurer while F. Philip Carbullido, Chief Justice of the Guam Supreme Court, will chair the education committee.

Planning for Festival of the Pacific Arts going strong

In about eight months, American Samoa's population will see a big boost when an estimated 2,000-plus performers and artists from over two dozen participating countries will travel to the territory to take part in the 2008 Festival of the Pacific Arts.

Since the announcement that American Samoa will host next year's big event – the largest one ever to be held in the territory – many people have asked the same question over and over again: "Where is everyone going to stay?" The answer is simple: American Samoa will not be erecting any new buildings, neither will there be any major construction projects to accommodate the participants traveling from off island. Instead, participants will be housed at Kanana Fou, Tafuna High School, Tafuna Junior High, and the Tafuna ECE campuses. The named facilities were suggested because they have ample kitchen and cafeteria spaces to accommodate the travelers, with extra bathrooms to be added.

The Office of Procurement is working on acquiring more than 2000 surplus beds from the General Services Administration, and a request has been made to hotel chains in the Aloha State for their cycled out linen.

Delegation leaders, VIPs, and tourists who are traveling here strictly as spectators will be staying at the local hotels.

A home-stay program will be announced early next year, and the committee members will inspect the homes, as well as make a decision on the standard charge.

The Veterans Memorial Stadium in Tafuna is where both the opening and closing ceremonies will be held, while the welcoming traditional 'ava ceremony will be held at the Malaeoletalu Fagatogo Pavilion. The Festival village will be in Utulei.

Arts Council travels to the Manu'a Islands to recruit for Holiday Music Festival

Five representatives from the American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, and Humanities were accompanied by employees of the Office of Public Information (KVZK-TV) to the Manu'a Islands yesterday to review performances by groups from Ofu, Olosega, Fitiuta, and Ta'u, as well as Manu'a High School auditioning for a slot in the upcoming Holiday Music Festival.

The trip was made possible thanks to federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The annual Christmas Holiday Music Festival is scheduled to be held at the Malaeoletalu Fagatogo Pavilion from December 16-18. In an earlier interview, Arts Council Executive Director Mrs. Leala Elisara Pili said that this year, they want the performances to be more traditional and that is why they are discouraging the use of modern organs and pianos but instead, encouraging the use of traditional musical instruments like the ukulele, kitara, and drum. Performers who have access to the *fagufagu* and the *lali* are welcomed to use those as well.

All registered participants have to audition for a slot in order to perform, and those selected will have to attend a meeting where details like time limits will be ironed out before the final program schedule of performances are distributed. An official list of this year's performers is not yet ready.

The Music Festival can include Nativity scenes and Christmas plays, provided that the performers furnish their own props.

Leala invites the public to come out and view this year's Music Festival "to celebrate the birth of Christ and at the same time, promote the art of music."

Employees of different departments and agencies of the American Samoa Government will be performing a week earlier during the ASG annual Christmas program also set to be held at the Fagatogo Pavilion. Rehearsals and choir practice sessions for different ASG departments and agencies are already being held. The annual Holiday Music Festival is sponsored by the American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, and Humanities, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

Togiola appoints members of the Economic Development Advisory Council

Governor Togiola Tulafono has appointed more than 30 individuals from the private sector and government officials as members of his Economic Development Advisory Council, which was established to forge close collaboration between the government and the private sector in economic development.

The council's role is to advise the governor on the formulation of long-term economic development policies for American Samoa. The 25 business representatives who have been appointed are: Pete Galea'i, Leilua Stevenson, Wallace Thompson, Vince Haleck, Ben Solaita, William Sword, Sione Kava, Robin Annesley, Fiti Sunia, Taase Amosa, Lautogia Taula, Ethan Lake, Robert Urhle, Dean Hudson, Andy Forsgren, Mary Anderson, Tom Drabble, Poe Mageo, Vui Florence Saulo, Gary Ayre, Brian Glass, Lauvao Steve Haleck, Henry Sesepasara and Leusoga Bill Emmsley.

Also appointed to the committee are the directors of Human Resources, Agriculture, Port Administration, ASTCA, ASPA, DOE, ASCC and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Council is chaired by the Governor's senior policy advisor Dr. Oreta Mapu Togafua and the President of the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce David Robinson.

Earlier this month, Governor Togiola Tulafono issued an Executive Order to establish the Economic Advisory Council. The Executive Order states that "driven by the rapidly changing, highly competitive global economy, it is critical for both sectors to work towards aligning public and private community resources to ensure the design and execution of effective, long term economic policies for the Territory."